

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EA/K:DAO'DONOHUE:MHS

APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

EA:PCHABIB

S/S - MR. BORG

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 063685

NODIS
CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: ARREST OF KOREAN POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS FIGURES

1. ROKG HANDLING OF MARCH 1 STATEMENT AND ARREST OF KIM TAE-CHUNG AND OTHER RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL FIGURES IS CAUSING SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR US. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT HIGHEST LEVELS OF ROKG UNDERSTAND IMPACT WHICH THEIR ACTIONS TO DATE HAVE HAD IN US AND THE STRAIN TRIAL OF KIM TAE-CHUNG AND OTHERS WOULD INEVITABLY PRODUCE IN OUR RELATIONS.

2. CONSEQUENTLY YOU SHOULD APPROACH AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY KIM CHUNG-YOM. YOU SHOULD TELL KIM THAT YOU ARE ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTION AND THAT WE HAVE CHOSEN HIM AS CHANNEL TO CONVEY OUR VIEWS TO PRESIDENT PARK BECAUSE OF SERIOUSNESS AND SENSITIVITY OF MARCH 1 CASE AND ROKG'S APPARENT DECISION TO DEAL SEVERELY WITH SOME OF THOSE INVOLVED.

3. WHILE WE HAVE NO DESIRE TO INVOLVE OURSELVES IN ROK
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DOMESTIC MATTERS, WE MUST WARN THAT A TRIAL OF KIM TAE-

CHUNG AND OTHERS WOULD BE INTERPRETED WIDELY AS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED AND DESIGNED TO SURPRESS ANY EXPRESSION OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION. THIS WOULD SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES ESSENTIAL FOR SUPPORT OF OUR

MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. AS A RESULT OF ROKG ACTIONS TO DATE, THE DANGER SIGNALS ARE ALREADY CLEAR THAT WE WILL BE FORCED ON THE DEFENSIVE BY CONGRESSIONAL CRITICS OF OUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE ROKG.

4. YOU SHOULD STRESS TO KIM THAT A POLITICAL TRIAL OF KIM AND THE OTHERS WOULD INTENSIFY EXISTING CONGRESSIONAL PRESURES AND COULD WELL MAKE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ROK A MATTER OF SERIOUS DEBATE IN THE POLITICAL AREA. YOU HOULD TELL KIM THAT WE BELIEVE ROKG SHOULD NOT PROCEED WITH A TRIAL OF KIM TAI CHUNG AND OTHERS FOR REASONS GIVEN ABOVE. WE BELIEVE THAT ROKG SHOULD FIND SOME MEANS TO EFFECT RELEASE OF THOSE NOW BEING HELD WITH REGARD TO MARCH 1 STATEMENT AS MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS TO AVOID THE ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES WHICH WE FORESEE. WE UNDERSTAND DIFFICULTY THIS POSES FOR ROKG, BUT BELIEVE THAT IT IS INCUMBENT ON US AS A FRIEND AND ALLY TO SPEAK FRANKLY ON A SUBJECT THAT AFFECTS US BOTH.

5. IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER SENIOR ROKG LEADERS, YOU SHOULD MAKE POINTS CONTAINED PARAS 2 AND 3 IN MORE GENERAL FASHION. WE, FOR OUR PART, INTEND TO INDICATE THAT WE HAVE EXPRESSED OUR CONCERNS OVER THIS CASE DIRECTLY TO THE ROK BUT WILL NOT DISCUSS EITHER CHANNEL OR CONTENT.

KISSINGER

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NNN

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